

Familiar dialogues on dancing, between a minister and a dancer; taken from matter of fact with an appendix containing some extracts from the writings of pious and eminent men against the entertainments of the stage, and other vain amusements ... By John Phillips ...

FAMILIAR DIALOGUES ON DANCING, BETWEEN A MINISTER AND A DANCER,
TAKEN FROM MATTER OF FACT WITH AN APPENDIX CONTAINING SOME
EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF PIOUS AND EMINENT MEN AGAINST
THE ENTERTAINMENTS OF THE STAGE, AND OTHER VAIN AMUSEMENTS
RECOMMENDED TO THE PERUSAL OF CHRISTIANS OF EVERY DENOMINATION.

BY JOHN PHILLIPS,

“What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost—For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify GOD in your body and in your spirit which are GOD'S.”

1. COR. vi. xix.

“Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate faith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, faith the Lord Almighty.”

2 COR. vi. xvii.

“Ubi est falsitas ibi est Diabolus, Chryso.”

“Nemo fabris falsat Cicero.”

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PREFACE.

What we receive by tradition from our parents relatives, or tutors; what we are initiated into, and the impreffions, which are made on our minds, at an early period of life, are contended for with the greateft warmth, and ten perfevered in with the fame integrity, as if altogether innocent. Tho' at the fame time may have a moft deftructive and baneful influence, on both body and mind, being contrary to truth; and if not abandoned, will terminate the deftruction of both. The whole ungodly world, lieth wickednefs; that is, in the arms of the wicked one. They are lulled into a lethargy: their minds are blinded by the God of this world, who works with mighty energy on their hearts, left they fhould awake to righteoufnefs and fin left they fhould believe in the Lord Jefus Chrifft and be faved. I have written the following with a view to facilitate the downfall of Satan's Kingdom, and with a fincere defire to affift unhappy beings in efcaping out of the fnare of the devil in which they are taken, captive that they may come to Chrifft for life and falvation.

Charleston Feb. 4, 1797.

DIALOGUES, &c.

D. I am glad of this interview with you, and having heard of your oppofition to dancing, I fhall meet you on your own ground, and prove its utility from the facred fcriptures. The Hebrew verb *rakad*, is rendered by Buxtorf, *falire*, *fubfalire*, to leap, to fkip, to jump, which I fhall prove to be full to the purpofe. Had you been a member of the Church of England, you would approve dancing yourfelf. I prefume then the difference between us, arifes merely from education; but however, I fee no evil in it, and therefore it cannot be fin in me to practife it. Moreover, we may fafely follow the example of our clergy, as they are an “holy priefthood by fucceffion.”

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M. I will patiently hear what you can advance from the holy scriptures in defence of dancing; for if the scriptures justify it, you have gained your point, meanwhile, permit me to say that affections are not proofs, and that the example of your clergy must not be followed, as it is contrary to our Lord's example, &c. that their holiness by succession is a cunningly devised fable, in as much as a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, that, were your clergy holy, they would walk as Christ walked; and consequently would not approve dancing. I was also a member of the Church of England, but on mature deliberation, saw that I could not partake at the Lord's table, and at the table of devils. I mean that I could not attend balls, plays, cards, &c. and then, by a feigned repentance, under the mark of religion, pretend to shew forth our Lord's death, by coming to sit at his table. Your seeing no evil in what you do, is no proof of your innocence, for the God of this world, viz. (the devil,) may have blinded your mind, and your conscience may be so hardened, that you see no evil in any thing that comports with the gratification of your carnal mind which is enmity against God. And as I do not object to skipping, &c. in a modest way, your quotation from Baxford, is nothing to the purpose. And I presume, the Canons of your church do not authorize you to live an unholy life, as all dancers must certainly do.

The dancing now under consideration, I call a practical science, the end of which, is either emolument, or else vain and idle amusement.

And first, I call it a science, because it is a theory consisting of a number of rules, arranged in a regular order. Secondly, I call it a practical science, because its theory is not intended to be a matter of mere speculation; but rather consists of rules which are to be put in practice.

Thirdly, I said, the end of which is either emolument or amusement: it is emolument in those who dance for hire, either in public or private, as well as in all who make a livelihood thereof by teaching in, but the general design of it is mere amusement.

Fourthly, I call it vain amusement; because it does not answer the end.

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Amusement is nearly the same as diversion. Now diversion properly speaking, is intended to relieve the body, mind, from the feverity of too intense labours; that after this relief, we may resume our labours with greater advantage. But dancing will not do this, for it rather fatigues, and dissipates our powers, than revives and strengthens them hence it is that however unfit for labour persons have been before dancing, they have been abundantly more so after it. Again I call it an idle amusement, because it. Again I call it an idle amusement, because it originates in idleness, and is generally followed by idle persons.

Those who are quite intent on useful labour, either of the body or mind, have little inclination for dancing, of consequence are seldom, if ever exercised therein. Secondly, it is generally followed by idle persons. Persons most addicted to dance, are either such as think they have little or nothing else to do, or else such as know they have business, but are too idle to do it.

Now it is this dancing, and this only which is the subject of our present dispute.

D. "Dancing, may be viewed, 1. as a natural manner of expressing our joy."

M. I answer, it is not so natural a manner of expressing it, but that there may be dancing when there is no joy expressed, nor is it so natural but that there may be joy expressed when there is no dancing.

And first, it is not so natural but that there may be dancing when there is no joy expressed. In idea, the joy which is expressed must be prior to the expression of it, as that joy is the foundation on which the expression is built, or the source from whence it flows. Now I ask, is it because dancers have cause to rejoice, and therefore do actually rejoice, that they go to dance in order to express that joy? Do they not rather dance without any prior joy exciting them to it? Do they not dance in general merely for the sake of dancing, while their hearts are far from rejoicing as the heart of an oak? Nay, do they not frequently dance in order

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to footh her forrows, to banifh their fears, and to drive conviction quite away? It is certain, then that perfons may dance when no joy is the caufe of it or can be expreffed thereby.

Secondly, It is not fo natural, but that there may be joy, and every proper expreffion of it, without dancing. When our Lord rejoiced in fpirit, Luke 10. 21. doubtlefs he properly expreffed it; but did he dance in order to that end? So when the Virgin Mary faid, my fpirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, the expreffed it in a very “natural manner,” yet we have no account of her dancing. Again, we are told, Acts 5. 41. That Peter and John, went away from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to fuffer fhame for his name; but it is not faid that they danced in order to a full and proper expreffion of it. St. Paul faith, Phil. 4. 10. I rejoice in the Lord greatly, but he gives no account in what manner he danced to exprefs it. Hebrews 8 Hebrews 10. 34. tells us that the Hebrew chriftians took joyfully the fpoiling of their goods; and no doubt but they expreffed their joy in a very natural and becoming manner, though we have no account of their dancing. Once more, when St. Paul faid Phil. 4. 4. Rejoice in the Lord always, he hardly expected the Phillippians to dance always, in order to exprefs it in the “moft natural manner.”

D. But “David we are told in 2. Sam. vi. 14, 16. leaped and danced before the Lord with all his might.”

M. True, but in what manner did he dance? Certainly not in that way now under confideration.

D. *Rakad* is by. Buxtorf renders “ *falire fubfalire* , to leap, to jump, to fkip. This verb is ufed in Pfal. cxiv. 4. 6. where it is faid the mountains fkiped like rams, and the little hills like lambs. And in Pfal. xxix. 6. defcribing the awful effects of lightning and thunder under the idea of the voice of Jehovah which makes the cedars of Lebanon to fkip like a calf. Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. And in its participle form in 1. Cron. xv. 29. Michal the daughter of Saul looking out at a window, faw king David dancing and playing.”

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M. Obferve, the dancing of David before the ark confifted of leaping, jumping and fkiping: of fkiping like rams and young lambs: of fkiping like a calf and a young unicorn: and therefore it is nothing to the prefent purpofe, feeing it bears no refemblance to the dancing taught by dancing mafters, which is prohibited by me and fome others. And that the dancing of David was of the fort mentioned above, and not of that genteel and fafhionable fort now in ufe among princes and others, appears from the sneers and contempt which Michal fhewed on the occafion. For it is faid, 2 Sam. vi. 16. That when Michal faw king David leaping and dancing before the Lord, fhe defpifed him in her heart. And the reafon the gave for this is mentioned ver. 20. Becaufe he uncovered himfelf to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his fervants, as one of the vain fellows fhamelefsly uncovereth himfelf. It was therefore on account of his uncovering himfelf, and leaping and fkiping in a moft inartificial and ruftic manner, which caufed Michal to defpife him, and to upbraid him with imitating the vain and fhamelefs fellows.

D. "We are told (Judges xi. 3, 5.) that Jephtha returning from the flaughter of the Ammonites, was met by his daughter and her companions with timbrels and with dances."

M. With regard to this paffage I obferve firft, that the inftance is fo remote, and the circumftances are fo different, that if we allow it to be any argument in favor of modern dancing, it muft be owned to be a very far fetched one. But I do not allow it to be any argument at all; for the dancing which is taught and practifed by art. But will you fay that there was any fuch dancing in Ifrael in the days of the Judges? I believe you will not. And yet you will allow, there was that among them which we call dancing; fuch as leaping, jumping, fkiping, &c. by which the people expreffed their gladnefs on a great variety of occafions: and this, or fomething like it, was the dancing of Jephthah's daughter and her companions.

D. "But they came with timbrels; therefore it muft be dancing by rule, feeing it was dancing with mufic."

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M. I anfwer, it is certain that the mufic of thofe times, and long after, was as rude, and inartificial as their dancing poffibly could be, and therefore I conclude that their dancing muft be equally inartificial, and of confequence that it bore no analogy to the dancing now in difpute. The truth of the matter feems to be this: Jephthah returning from the flaughter of the Ammonites, his daughter and her companions went out to meet him, playing on timbrels, and with fuch other expreffions of joy as became their fex, and the folemnity of the occafion.

D. "But it is faid 1 Sam. xviii. 6. 7. that "the women came out of all the cities of Ifrael, fing and dancing, with tabrets, with joy, and with infruments of mufic, and they anfwered as they played and faid, Saul hath flain his thoufands, and David his ten thoufands."

M. Now on this paffage I obferve firft, that it is faid, the B women 10 women came out of all the tribes of Ifrael: that is, they came in great multitudes, even thoufands upon thoufands.

Now if we add to thefe all the men who came before them, with them, and after them, there muft have been quite too many for artificial dances; for we all know that in fome dances a fingle couple will occupy the greateft part of a confiderable room. Now if there were only twenty thoufand prefent, it muft take up the whole fide of a country, to make fufficient room for fuch a number to dance regularly and artificially. Secondly, thefe dancers muft be uncommonly induftrious in their dancings; for they muft firft obferve tune and time in playing with their hands: and fecondly attend to all the diverfity of fteps in artificial dancings with their feet, and make the refponfes with their voices, fome of them crying, Saul hath flain his thoufands, and others replying, David his tens of thoufands; which is too abfurd to be fuppofed; but the truth feems rather to be this. When the people had heard what Saul and David had done, they gathered together in multitudes from all parts, and expreffed their joy in a promifcuous manner, and with fuch triumphant founds and motions as cannot poffibly be expreffed by artificial dancing.

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D. "It is written Exod. xv. 20, 21. that Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went after her with timbrels and with dances, and Miriam answered them, Sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously. May we not suppose that Miriam and her company of women formed themselves into a separate choir, and that their joyous motions were regulated by music, vocal and instrumental, while they repeated the triumphant words of the twenty-first verse?"

M. I answer, we have no reason to believe any such thing, quite the contrary. To make this appear, let us first consider the state of the Hebrews, both men and women. A little before this, they were in absolute slavery in Egypt, where their four fathers had been for four hundred and forty years. Secondly, that for a long time, they had suffered most cruel oppressions, which were intended, not only to prevent their flourishing, but even to destroy them. To this it is to be added they were appointed to labour in the most servile employment of making bricks. And lest this should not oppress them enough, they were obliged to make the quantities even without measure, so that the men may with great propriety be called the brickmakers of Egypt, and the women, the brickmakers mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters. Now was it ever known that such women were great adepts at artificial music and dancing. And can we suppose that while the men were toiling under the rod of their masters, their women were improving under the position of their dancing masters! Even while their cries and groans were entering into the ears of the God of heaven? It is certain, then, that unless they did this, they could know nothing of artificial music, and dancing, and whatever dancing was found among them, must be of the most natural kind, and the supposition that Miriam and her company of women, formed themselves into a choir, as our modern dancers do, is quite groundless all we can suppose they did, was to found in a rude and artless manner, the imperfect instruments they brought out of Egypt, and to show such other demonstrations of joy, as is natural to a poor and oppressed people, just escaped out of the jaws of destruction.

D. "But David in Psalm 30. 11. says, Thou hast "turned my mourning into dancing."

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M. I answer, in the old translation, which is in many respects by far the best, it is rendered, "Thou hast turned my heaviness into joy. And the copy of the 72 anciently, as well as now read it *eis charan*, into joy, and so is followed by the Latin, Syriac, and Arabic. D. Again it is laid, in Psalm. 149. 3. Let them "praise his name in the dance."

M. I answer, the marginal reading is, Let them praise name with the pipe; so in Psalm 150. 4. the margin reads it with the pipe; so in Psalm 150. 4. the margin reads it with the pipe. So that neither of these are any thing to the purpose.

D. "Again, Psalm. 87. 7. is rendered by Buxtorf in his Hebrew Lexicon, *Et cantantes æqua ac tripudiantes* : i. e. As well the fingers as the "dancers shall be there."

M. To this I answer as the text is; as well the fingers as 12 as the players on instruments shall be there; see Dr. Hammonds paraphrase? "but the fingers as well as the minstrels shall come, &c." From what has been said, it is evident that there is nothing said in the above about dancing, either of one sort or another.

D. "Again from the above passages we may conclude, that dancing was practiced in the religious worship of the Jewish church, and that it was connected with, and regulated by music, both vocal and instrumental."

M. I answer, that no such thing appears from any passage which has been quoted, and that it was no part of the religious worship of the Jewish church, appears from hence, that though we have a full and particular account of all the officers of the Tabernacle and Temple, we have no account of the dancers, either masters or others. In I. Chron. 15. 18. we are told that Zachariah, Ben Jaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehial, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, &c. were the heads of the porters, then over the fingers, Heman, Afeph, and Ethan, were appointed to sound with cymbals of brass. The Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, were over the psalteries on the Abamoth, Mattithiah, &c. were over the harps on the Sheminith to excell. Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for, or over the song, because he was skillful.

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Berechiah and Elkanah, were doorkeepers for the ark, and Shebaniah, &c. did blow the trumpets.

We have here a distinct account of all the services, and officers of the Tabernacle and temple, even from the highest priest down to the meanest porter, and particularly of the several sorts of music, and the masters thereof, but we have not one by syllable concerning dancing masters; which is an infallible proof that there were no such beings employed in any part of the “religious worship of the Jewish church.”

D. “The next scripture is, Matt. 11. 17, where our Lord saith, “We have piped and ye have not danced.”

M. To this I answer, if the dancing here spoken of, is to be understood literally, we must say that our Lord and the Baptist literally piped; which was not the case. All therefore, that can be meant, is that there was something in the preaching of Christ and the Baptist, which bore some resemblance to children piping to their fellows; and something thing 13 in the Jews, which resembled the others refusing to dance.

D. “Again in Matt. 14. 6. we are informed that “the daughter of Herodias *orchestrated* danced and pleased Herod.”

M. She did, and by so doing, was the cause of one of the greatest murders ever committed on earth.

Would you seriously propose the dancing of a trumpet, before a debauched and an adulterous king, as an example for Christians to imitate? What must the religious matron, and those who are communicants too, teach their daughters to dance as the daughter or Herodias did? Shudder at the thought.

D. “Again St. Luke mentions, chap. 15. 25. “that the return of the prodigal son was celebrated in his father's house with music *kai choon* and dancing.”

M. On this paffage I obferve firft, that the whole ftory is a mere parable, as every one ought to know, fecondly, that in all parables a great variety of circumftances are introduced, only for the fake of making the narrative complete, and thirdly, that for this purpofe inftances are fometimes introduced, for wife and moral purpofes, which in themfelves are unwife and immoral. Take one inftance. The Lord is faid to commend the unjuft fteward. Now would you not fhudder if you heard any one recommend injuftice, becaufe the Lord is faid to do it? And yet there is better reafon for fo doing, than for recommending dancing from what is faid in this parable; feeing it is not, either here or elfewhere faid in the Bible that the Lord commended dancers or dancings.

D. “But there is a paffage in the Acts, viz. 3. 8. “which militates in favour of dancing, as being an innocent expreffion of joy, and even allowable in fome circumftances, in religious worfhip.”

M. (One would think that the grand argument remained which fhould give ftrength and weight to all the reft, but I think it is the weakeft of all, however let it be examined.) D.

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D. “The impotent man who had never walked, being miraculoufly endued with ftrength, in his limbs by Peter, in the name of Jefus Chrif, leaped up from the ground where he had lain, ftood and walked, and his loving grateful heart, urging him publicly to acknowledge the incftimable favour, he entered into the Temple with Peter and John, not only walking, but leaping and praifing God.”

M. On this paffage I obferve, firft, that the impotent man is faid to be fo lame from his mother's womb, that he was carried wherever he went, of confequence he never could be under the tuition of a dancing mafter; fecondly, that when he was reftored, he leaped up, ftood, and walked and entered into the Temple walking, leaping, and praifing God. Now it is allowed that the Greek verb *allomai falio*, I leap or jump from which the participles *allomenos* leaping, and *exallemenos* leaping up; comes from the Hebrew verb *calal*,

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faltare, tripudiare to leap, to dance, to skip along. It is known that every interpreter, or commentator, &c. ought to chuse that term which best agrees with the subject under consideration, and not that which does not agree with it at all. But the terms, walking, and leaping, best agree with the lame man entering into the Temple, in a joyous manner, immediately after receiving so miraculous a cure, and therefore our translators must be in the right in rendering the words walking and leaping, and praising God. But suppose they had rendered them walking and dancing, &c. I should be glad to know what sort of dancing it was; whether artificial, or inartificial? If it was artificial, consisting of minuets, jigs, hornpipes, or country dances, I shall be glad to know first, who was the dancing master that taught him? And secondly, who were his partners! surely you will not say that Peter and John, were either the one or the other! tho' they were the only persons we have any account of, who spoke to him, took him by the hand, lifted him up, and walked with him into the Temple. If it was inartificial dancing, consisting of leaping, jumping, and skipping, then it is nothing to the purpose; for I allow children to leap, skip, and jump, to exercise their limbs, and unbend their minds, and preserve their health and vigour of spirit. D.

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D. "But dancing may be considered as an art we are taught good carriage, a graceful and easy way of moving our limbs, and a genteel manner of address."

M. I answer these may be learnt without the help of dancing master; instance, multitudes of the rich Quakers, both male and female, for tho' these hold dancing in abomination, yet it is a fact that thousands of them have as good a carriage, a graceful and easy way of moving their limbs, and as genteel a manner of address as any who have much time and money, under the instruction of a dancing master. (And I might have added, much more modesty.) The means used by the Quakers to give children good carriage same effect on others. This I know by experience, for the young ladies who were under my wife's tuition in England, were admired for their genteel carriage and address; and was frequently asked

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who is their dancing master, tho' they had never been instructed by any, but only taught how walk, to enter, and to leave a room, &c. by S—h P—s.

D. "But dancing is conducive to health."

M. What, artificial dancing, taught by a dancing With regard to health, I must beg leave for want of learning to dance, there have been thousands who have lost both health and life together by means of dancing; to say nothing of the numberless Abortions caused thereby, in adults. Instance. Mifs H—I, who went from Charleston to visit her friends in the country, where cost her, her life. She was a young lady in the bloom of life, and of a very amiable disposition; are parents devoid of feeling? Or why do they not renounce this abominable practice? And the Rev, Mr. J—n's, daughter lost her life, thro a dance; and so have many others.

D. "You have had your child taught to read, and you with him, or her, to contrast a fondness for reading. are at last gratified in your wish. But the only book your son will read, are the loose novels and plays which he can lay his hands on, &c. &c. Was it wrong to have had these children taught reading in their childhood; because they now make a bad use of the education they then received?"

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M. I answer, the case is in no wise parallel; for reading is one of the most excellent and useful accomplishments, parent can give his son; and whether the son makes a right or wrong use of it, the parent is to be commended for having performed a most necessary duty towards his child, if therefore the son abuses the benefit, he only is to blame, For instance, if a parent puts a pious book into the hands of his son, that he may improve by it, in the knowledge of religion, the parent is to be highly commended for what he has done; but if the son throws it into the fire, he only is blameworthy. But this cannot be laid of dancing, seeing as I have shewn above, it is in itself, an unnecessary qualification, and

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seeing the evils attendant on it, are not abuses thereof, but follow almost of unavoidable consequence: so that the parent is the original cause of them all.

D. "But we do not mean by any thing we have said to encourage or defend the practice of frequenting balls, assemblies, &c. we know how dangerous such entertainments are for young minds."

M. Is it not surprising then, you do not see that whatever has any tendency towards, it must be of dangerous consequence and that learning to dance, in children has this tendency?

D. But children without dancing contract ungraceful ward habits of fitting, standing and walking.

M. To this I answer, who stand or walk with more gracefulness and accuracy than the common *well* disciplined soldiers in the marching regiments? Who stand more exact? Who use their hands, arms, legs and feet, with more exact propriety? and yet, though they were awkward and clownish to the last degree till they were even grown up to manhood, with *only* the instruction of a corporal and a sergeant, who themselves were absolutely clowns a few years before, all their awkwardness and clownishness is perfectly removed. Now I should have a very poor opinion of parents and teachers who could not do as much by precepts and examples, a sergeant and corporal can so expeditiously do for a number of clownish recruits.

D. "But a dancing master can teach these things sooner and better." M.

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M. I deny this. For they may be taught much sooner and as well by the parent or tutor &c. who have not to attend to the particular bows, serapes, steps and capers, of the different dances, but only to what is essential to the business in hand.

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D. "But experience affures us, that mufic greatly affifts them in receiving inftructions, therefore the ufe of mufic cannot be prohibited."

M. Whatever ufe mufic may be of in learning to dance minuets, &c. the common foldiers in a marching regiment, the gentcel Quakers, and thoufands besides, fhew that it is not neceffary in order to a good carriage. I cannot fee what need there is of mufic in order to teach a child, or a grown perfon to ftand erect, to adjuft the different members of his body, to turn upon the heel, to open or that a door, &c. If I am not miftaken, the brayings of an af, or the fqualls of a parrot, are as much connected with thefe as the founds of the flute or the violin. But let us fuppofe for argument fake, that dancing is a little thing, do we not know that the little foxes will ruin the vine, Cant. ii. 15. and that he who contemneth fmall things fhall fall by little and little, Eccl. 19, 1.

The Primitive Fathers fpoke of dancing as a moft atrocious and fcandalous evil; fo St. Ambrofe; "None may dance but the daughter of an adulterefs; but the who is chafte, let her teach her daughter prayer, not dances." Again, faith he, "What modefty can there be where dancers fhrick and make a noife together?"

St. Hieron faith, "Where the timbrels found, the pipe makes a noife, the harp chatters, the cymbals ftrike together, what fear of God can their be?" *Hieron lib. contr. Helvid* .

St. Chryfoftom faith, "Where wanton dancing is, there certainly the devil is prefent; for God hath not given us legs to dance but that we fhould walk modeftly not fkip like camels; but if the body be polluted by dancing impudently, how much more may the foul be thought to be defiled? The devil danceth in thefe dances." See Hom. 49. on Matt.

St. Bafil faith, "Men and women together entering into C common 18 common dances, having delivered their fouls to the drunken devil, wound one another with the pricks of unchaste affections: profufe laughter is cherished, and filthy songs, meretricious habit inviting unto petulancy are there used. Laught thou, and delightest thou thyself with

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an arrogant delight, whereas thou oughtest to pour out tears and sighs for what is past. Dost thou stir thy feet and caper furisoufly, and dance unhappily, whereas thou oughtest to bend thy knees in prayer." See Orat. contra. Ebr. St. Augustine faith, "Every caper in a dance is a step into a deep jakes." Befides thefe we have large accounts of dancing being condemned and prohibited by councils and fynods in former ages. In the council of Laodicea it was decreed that christians should not go to wedding &c. (*habare vel faltare*) bleat or dance: but sup or dine chastely as becometh chriftians. See c. 52.

The univerfal council of Conftantinople, &c. forbad dancing, efpecially at weddings. Afted.

Befides thefe, dancing has been condemned by a great number of other councils, &c. too numerous to mention.—And also by Peter Martyr, Erasmus, Pellican, Calvin, Aristotle, Seneca, Macrobius, Sallustius, Plautus, Polux., &c. Pope Clement V. Innocent III &c. To these I shall add a few more of those christians who bore testimony against dancing. The ancient Waldenfes, it is said, make dancing to be a breach of the Ten Commandments. Angel de Clavafio, is full upon the point. Quem. wide, page 55 where he makes dancing a mortal fin.

Cardinal Bellarmine inveighs very bitterly against it, and cites the authorities both of the Greek and Latin Fathers as on his side. Con. 6. 3. 19. 20. 21.

The titular Bishop of Geneva, (S. Fr. Sales) is very fevere, but at last concludes that they (dancings) are like mushrooms, the best are bad and dangerous, at least nothing worth. See Sales Introd.

Cardinal Barrowmeus faith, when he was a young man at the University, he and his companions prevailed with one of their professor, a grave young man, to go with them to a ball, who observed—&c. told them it was an invention of the devil 19 devil to deftroy souls. See Author of the Education of young Gentleman. Mr. de Rhodéz faith, "Nothing more dissipate the Spirits than the ravishing harmony of dancing, and charms of women."—

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Doubtlefs it was a conviction of this which caused Cicero long before to say, *Nemo fobrius faltat* . No modeft man danceth.

I fhall only add what Mr. Chambers fays, viz. that Cicero reproached Gabinius on account of dancing, that Tiberius expelled the dancers out of Rome; and that Domitian excluded several members from the Senate for having danced. See Chambers' Cyclopædia. We have many instances of later date which mention the great diftrefs which dancers have felt when near death; how they blamed their parents, &c.

Having confidered your arguments and the fcriptures you have advanced in favor of dancing, I cannot conclude without a few obfervations on the great impropriety of Christian Parents permitting their children to learn to dance.

As thefe parents desire their own Salvation, it would be absurd to fuppofe that they did not alfo desire the falvation of their children. In order to this end, they must with them to be bible christians, i.e. they must with them to be thoroughly acquainted with the principles of our holy religion, poffefs the tempers, and walk in all the ways described therein. And if they wish this in earneft, they will think it their duty to warn and guard them againft whatever may have the finalleft tendency to divert their attention, and draw them afide thefe important concerns. Now one mean of this, moft certainly is dancing; which will be evident from the following confiderations. First, it is the duty of every christian parent, to ufe all poffible means to bring up his child in the instruction and difcipline of the Lord; inform him that it is his duty to love God with his whole heart, foul, mind, and ftrength, and his neighbour as himfelf. That this is commanded by the *Almighty God* . Now that he may be brought to be thoroughly acquainted with this important duty, the parent ought to endeavour to fix his child's attention, and to caufe him to think as clofely of it as his capacity will admit. In order to this great end, the parent 20 parent ought to guard his child againft every thing which will divert his attention, and turn his thoughts into a quite different channel. Now it is infallibly certain, that fetting him to learn to dance has this tendency, as it fills his mind with thoughts of the pleafing amufement, and of various other particulars

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connected with it. It is therefore no wonder that so many professing christian parents have cause to complain, that their children, even those who are ten, twelve, or fourteen, years of age, are more ignorant of God, and themselves, (having opposed the dictates of conscience) than if they were so many young Hottentots! which is really the case of multitudes of them, particularly of the young dancers, and those who follow the fashionable vices of the age. Where then is the prudence, the conscience, the fear of God, the love, the duty that such parents owe to their children, in putting such stumbling blocks in their way, as to prevent their taking one step towards the kingdom of glory. Secondly, If children as soon as they know how to refuse the evil, and to choose the good, are accountable to God for their actions, if they are free agents, if their obedience or disobedience depends on a right or wrong use of their moral free agency, how necessary is it that they should be guarded from the evil, and be exhorted to choose the good? That having done wrong, the parent may by reasonable reproofs and kind admonitions, cause them to feel sorrow, and shame. Which being attended by a holy mourning, and true contrition, may be productive of that repentance unto life which needeth not to be repented of. And the parent must do this without delay, knowing that actual sin renders them guilty before God, and obnoxious to his divine displeasure; and that they may experience this repentance unto life, parents ought to guard them against every thing which has the smallest tendency to prevent it; and cause them to use every mean to raise and perfect it. But will teaching them to dance do this? Have the fountains of the vial, the light airy frothy capers and instructions of a dancing master any tendency this way? The case is too obvious to require an answer, or even a moment's consideration; for every man, woman, and child, sees at once, that the only tendency of such things, must be to drive all penitential sorrow far away.

Thirdly, Prayer also is a most necessary duty incumbent on all children who are capable of it, and they ought to be taught this, as soon as they know good from evil. They ought also to be taught that the heart should be engaged therein, and also that they must be in good earnest, feeling God is the rewarder of those only, who diligently seek him.

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Parents ought to be very cautious how they engage their children in any thing which tends to cause or encrease, in them, an aversion to prayer! If they would do this, they must keep them from dancing, and all other vain amusement. As nothing can be more opposite than the spirit of prayer and the spirit of dancing.

Fourthly, In order to our salvation, whether we are parents or children, there must be a relief for all the ordinances of God. We must delight in the word and sacrament, in hearing, reading, and meditation, and also in conversing with the followers of Christ. Now I ask, even those parents who suffer their children to dance, if they think that dancing has any tendency this way? Partial as they are, they cannot but own the contrary; they cannot but own that, if their children spoke freely, they would own that they have a thousand times more pleasure in hearing the music of their dancing master, than in hearing any minister of Christ; and that half an hour's converse with the people of God, or even with religious children, about any thing serious, would be irksome to them, while the conversation of their companions in dancing, would for hours together, be the very joy of their hearts.

Fifthly, As the work of our salvation is a matter of the most serious concern, parents ought to teach their children to be seriously engaged therein, to think, pray, read, and hear the word in the most serious manner, and thus to grow in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and men, until they arrive at the measure of the stature, of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. Has dancing any tendency to promote this seriousness? Is it not rather as great an antidote against it, as can be possibly conceived? For what can be a more effectual guard against, even a serious thought, than the appearance and performance of a dancing school, or a ball room, plays, horse races, cards, &c.

Sixthly, Every parent who wishes the present and eternal welfare of his children, ought to teach them to fear God ways before their eyes; to remember, that he is about their bed, and about their path, and pierce out all their ways: that there is not a word in their tongue, nor a thought in their heart, but he knoweth it altogether. Now as this is really the case, ought not children, long before the times they are capable of learning to dance, to be instructed

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in, and deeply impprefted with a sense of this most awful truth? But if instead of doing this, we send them to learn dancing, and other worldly amufements, what wonder that they can spend days and weeks, if not months and years, without having, God in all their thoughts?

Seventhly, That parent is moft shamefully wanting who does not teach his children to redeem their time. The great work of anfwering the end of our creation, which is manifest the glory of God, and thereby, to fecure eternal life, is not the bufiness of a moment. We ought to begin it as foon as we are capable of knowing good from evil, and earneftly purfue it all our days. It fo, What time for learning to dance in our youth, and for following it afterwards Certainly none at all. The mighty concerns we all have on our hands, demand all our attention, all our care, and all our endeavours, and therefore, he who fquander away any part of his momentary exiftence, knows but little of the portance either of time, or eternity. 8thly Every wife parent, who wifhes to preferve his children from destruction, endeavour to inftil into them, a deep fenfe of their danger. To this end, he muft inform them, that their adverfary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about feeking whom he may devour, and then muft ftrongly urge them to take themfelves the whole armour of God, that they may be able to ftand in the evil day; and that they ought to watch in all things, left their inexperienced hearts fhould be beguiled by the fubtlty of fatan. Suppofe the parent, after giving fuch folemn, fuch neceffary admonitions, fhould talk of fending thefe children to a dancing fchool, or fuffer them to 23 to frequent balls, or to appear at the public, fo called, &c. could they poffibly think he was in earneft? Could they think their parent believed one word of the danger he had been fpeaking to them of? For, would they not naturally conclude, if he really believed the caution he had been giving them, he could not be fo inconffitent as to wifh them to learn or fee any thing which fo naturally tends to alienate their minds from God, and to fet them off their guard.

Ninthly, The parent who wifhes well to his children muft guard them againft conformity to the world. For if he is wife, he will fee how enfnaring the vanities of the world are to youthful minds, therefore he will daily, and almoft hourly, be ringing in their ears. Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds; for all that

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is in the world, the laid of the flesh the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, (that is, the desire of the pleasure of the outward senses, of the pleasures of the imagination, all that pomp in clothes, houses, furniture, &c. which generally procure honor from the bulk of mankind, and to gratify pride and vanity,) is not of the father, but is of the world; and the world puffeth away and the lust thereof. Now if a parent really desires his children to stand clear in this respect, will he, can he put them under the tuition dancing master, whose very profession is to sow, water, and bring up to maturity the seeds of folly and vanity.

Tenthly, A wife and humble parent cannot but wish that his children may learn of Christ to be meek and lowly of heart, that they may find rest unto their souls; and will wish them to appear so in all their outward deportment. And must urge them to, this by telling them that God rebuffeth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. But supposing after all those important warnings, and admonitions; Miss is told that (she is going to learn to, dance, and that she must mind her master and be very clever, and that she must not suffer herself to be excelled by the first lady in the school; moreover, when she comes home she must give her mamma, pappa a specimen of her improvement, (i.e. if she goes abroad to learn,) and if all is not done to a nicety, there is this fault in her carriage, and ten or twenty more in her ungenteel appearance. pearance. 24 I ask after this, what notion can this young lady (so called) have of the lectures on humility she so lately and so often received? Will she not think that humility is of no great importance? Or else that her parents are dreadfully inconsistent.

Eleventhly, It is the indispensable duty of all Christians, both parents and children, to deny themselves, and to take up their crosses daily, and follow Christ. Ought not parents then to labour to instil into their children a true notion of the necessity of this? And ought they not likewise to endeavour to give them a habit of doing it, before the principle of self-indulgence takes too deep root within them? I ask, has learning to dance any such tendency? Quite the reverse, as every one may see at first view. Hence the generality of those who are

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ufed to follow dancing and dancing mafters, have no more defire to follow Chrift in the regeneration, than to fink into the bottom of the fea.

Twelfthly, Parents who are not flothful in bufinefs, but rather labour to be ufeful members of fociety, ought to bring up their children in fuch a manner, that they alfo may be ufeful in their day and generation. But of what ufe can it be, either to themfelves or others that they are taught to dance? With refpect to themfelves, will it either in their childhood or at any other time be a mean of helping them to glorify God in their bodies and fpirits in this life, or add one pearl to their crown in that which is to come? And as to others, what will they be the better for our learning to dance? Will it give more weight to our inftructions, warnings and admonitions? will it enable us or our children to caufe our light, our chriftian light, to fhine before men, that they feeing our good works, both we and they may glorify our Father who is in Heaven? Certainly nothing of this kind is, or can be expected.

Thirteenthly, As all chriftian parents are taught to glorify God with their bodies and their fpirits which are his, and that they muft do this in eating and drinking, and in whatever elfe they do, they ought to teach their children to do the fame. But will teaching them to dance do this? Who will be fo abfurd, fo ridiculous, fo prophane, as to fay, a child glorifies God with his body in learning to dance? Or, that a grown perfon does it in the act of dancing?

Fourteenthly,

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Fourteenthly, Whatever a chriftian does in word or deed, he ought to do it to the glory of God in the name of our Lord Jefus Chrift.

I afk, (if it is not too abfurd to be mentioned) can any parent, while putting his child under the tuition of a dancing-mafter fay, In the name of our Lord Jefus Chrift I put my child to learn to dance! And ought not every parent to teach his children alfo to do all things in the name of our Lord? Suppofe he has done this, and then hears them fay, particularly thofe who are ten or twelve years of age, In they name O Chrift! I am going to dance! Is not the

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thought almost too shocking to be mentioned? And yet christian children must, in effect, thus express themselves or else have nothing to do with dancing.

Fifteenthly, St. Paul faith that christians ought in every thing to give thanks, that is they are to thank God in every affliction, on account of its not being greater, and to thank him *for every favor, or in the possession thereof*. I ask, can a christian parent thank God for giving him an inclination, and an opportunity of getting his children taught to dance? Or can the children thank God for the assistance they have had in dancing? and for the great proficiency they have made therein? If a child of five years old was to mention such a thing, would not one who is only a year older be ready to reprove the great impiety of such a proposal.

Lastly, As God has promised to reward his people for all their virtuous actions in this life, no christian parent ought to do any thing but what he believes is in its own nature rewardable. But what reward can he expect for having his children taught to dance? Certainly none at all: and therefore all the pains and expence they have been at on this occasion, to say the least, must go without a reward. And the same may be said of their children; for they have no cause to think that Christ will pay unto them, on account of their dancing, Well done good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord. All, therefore, that remains for such parents and children to expect on account of dancing, is, that they be either pardoned or punished, for rewarded they cannot be. And although some of these dancers, who dance for emolument, I mention 26 and some of the play actors have done apparent acts of Charity, to blind the eyes of the public, yet notwithstanding these as their gifts, were a part of the wages of unrighteousness, or of their unjust gain, they cannot be rewarded for them, as none can be rewarded but he who does God's commandments. And as God has nowhere commanded us to do evil that good may come, the damnation of all dancers, and play-actors, &c. &c. will be just, if they die as they live! Yea, though they should say we have ate and drank in thy presence, and in thy name done many wonderful things; God will pay unto them, together with their auditors, "Depart from me ye workers of iniquity."—"There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth!" Tate Wilkinson (manager of the Theatres Royal at York and

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Hull) fays, that Play-actors are agitated fiends, that it requires a fpice of the devil, to make a good actor, &c. Is it not ftrange that many ladies fo called, will not keep company with or countenance an actrefs, yet they will go to hear them! What is the reafon, do you think they are immodeft, why do you encourage them in it by frequenting the play houfe? Know you not that thefe fhall be your companions in hell fire unlefs you amend your ways, come out from among the wicked, and become altogether chriftians, all your mock modefty will avail you nothing! Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatfoever feed a man foweth that fhall he alfo reap.

From all that hath been faid we learn that it is abfolutely inconffitent with the duty which chriftian parents owe to God—their families and themfelves, to fuffer their children to learn artificial dancing; and that it is more efpecially fo, and at the fame time highly criminal, if in any degree they have an active part therein. Some of the Clergy (to their fhame be it fpoken) have moft fhamefully degraded themfelves, and expofed their children to prefent fhame and future contempt through fuffering them to be inftructed in this fashionable vice. O! how will they look God in the face, on account of their thus conniving at, and publicly abetting the damnation of men? O ye Clergy, another day will teach you terrible things! O! what will you think when death lays hold upon you, and when the wrath of God comes upon you to the uttermoft? A

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A young lady in England, (at an early period of life) was fent to Mifs O—as fchool at P—bl—w, (where fhe under the miniftry of the word through divine grace) experienced juftification from fin, and peace with God through our Lord Jefus Chrif. But her father, who moved in a high circle, not content with the inward adorning of her mind, and the plainnefs of her drefs, (*though in the fight of God of great price* .) would often put her to the blufh before company, becaufe of the plainnefs of her drefs, or, becaufe fhe did not drefs fuitable to her ftation, as he termed it; but all to no purpofe till at length he promifed her that he would purchafe a very grand country feat and a coach for her, if fhe would alter her drefs, &c. by which means, he, with ftrong importunity, prevailed on her to yield

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to his wifhes. He fometime after this married her to a Gentleman of respectability by whom fhe had feveral children. But what was the confequence of her being prevailed on by her Father thus to deny Chrif for earthly peafures? It was that Chrif left her to purfue her unhappy choice, as the event has proved; for fhe has eloped from her hufband with the father of her fifter's hufband (who is a Col. in the Army) to the unfpeakable grief at her Father who was brought near the gates of death through it; and her Mother-in-law died, it is probable through mere forrow of heart. How foolifh then beyond defcription, are thofe parents who do not inftruct their children, to fhun the very appearance of evil, and who do not reduce every effort to practice, to prejudice them againft all fafhionable vices, and in favor of genuine religion. I have juft received the above relation from England, the family I was well acquainted with, I hope it may be a warning to others, whether parents or children, how they trifle with God and divine things, left he give them up to a hard heart and a reprobate mind, and fwear in his wrath that they fhall not enter into his reft.

O ye parents! Can you reconcile light with darknefs, or Chrif with Belial? You cannot! Why then are you fo vain, as to imagine that your children, when trained up in the fafhionable vices and amufements of the age, will love God and religion? Or can it poffibly be, that you are fo much blinded by the God of this world, as to fuppofe that they can ferve 28 ferve God and the world at one and the fame time; Or are you living without God in the world, in a fhamelefs, Chriftlefs, thoughtlefs and carelefs manner? Regardlefs whether they are faved or fhames? Know ye not that the friendfhip of the world is enmity with God? That the pleafure takes is dead while the liveth? Dead to God, dead in trefpaffes and in fins? O ye parents! Are you not afhamed to couress Chrif openly? Let it be remembered that Chrif will be afhamed of you before his Father and the Holy. Angels! Do you not refign your dignity in your families, neglecting prayer, left you fhould give offense to your pretended friends? And when they fcoff at religion, do you not *trifle* with them, when you ought to reprove them? Or by conniving at their fins, fuffer your children to be led aftray? O! how will you meet death and judgment? Muft the fentence "Depart ye curfed,." convince you of fin and its evil nature and confequences?

**AN APPENDIX, CONTAINING SOME EXTRACTS, &c. FROM THE TRULY GRAT
PASCALL.**

THERE is nothing more capable of letting us into the knowledge of human misery, than an enquiry after the real cause of that perpetual hurry and confusion, in which we pass our lives. The soul is sent into the body, to be the sojourner of a few days. She knows this is but a stop, till she may embark for eternity; and that a small space allowed her to prepare for the voyage. The main part of this space is ravished from her by the necessities of nature; and but a slender pittance left to her own disposal: and yet this moment that remains does so strangely oppress and perplex her, that she only studies how to lose it. She feels an intolerable burthen, in being obliged to live with herself, and think of herself; and therefore, her principal care is to forget herself, and to let this short and precious moment pass away without reflection, by amusing herself with things that prevent her notice of its speed. This is the ground of all the tumultuary business, of all the trifling diversions amongst men; in which our general aim is to make the time pass off our hands without feeling it, or rather without feeling ourselves; and, by getting rid of this small portion of life, to avoid that inward disgust and bitterness, which we should not fail to meet with, if we found leisure to descend into our own breasts.

—Having no infallible remedy against ignorance, misery, and death, we imagine that at least some respite, some shelter may be found, by agreeing to banish them from our meditation. This is the only comfort which mankind have been able to invent under these numerous calamities. But a most miserable comfort it proves, because it does not tend to the removal of these evils, but only to the concealment of them for a short season; and because, in thus concealing them, it hinders us from applying such proper means as would remove them. Thus, by a strange revolution in the nature of man, that grief and inward dislike which he dreads as the greatest of sensible evils, is in one respect, his greatest good, because it might contribute, more than all things besides, to the putting of him in a successful method of recovery. On the other hand, his diversions, which he seems to prize as his sovereign good,

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are indeed his greateft evil, becaufe they are of all things the moft effectual in making him negligent trader his diftemper: they do but amufe and beguile him; and, in the conclufion, lead him down blindfolded into the grave. It is indeed one of the miracles of chriftianity, that by reconciling man to God, it restores him to his own good opinion; that it makes him able to bear the fight of himfelf; and in fome cafes, renders folitude and filence more agreeable than all the intercourfe and action of mankind. Nor is it by fixing man in his own perfon, that thefe wonderful effects are produced; it is by carrying him to God, and by fupporting him under the fenfe of his miferies, with the hopes of an affured and complete deliverance in a better life. FROM

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It is impoffible to confider the bufinefs of a player, and to compare it with the chriftian profeffion, without being fenfible that there is nothing more unworthy of a child of God, and of a member of Jefus Chrif, than this employment. I do not fpeak of the grofs irregularities only, and the diffolute manner in which the women appear on the ftage, becaufe thofe who juftly plays, always feparate thofe loft of diforders from them in their imagination, though they are never feparated in effect. I fpeak only of that which is abfolutely infeperable from them. 'Tis an employment, the end of which is the diverfion of others, where men and women appear on a Theatre, to reprezent the paffions of Hatred, Anger, Ambition, Revenge, and chiefly that of Love. They muft exprefs them as lively, and as naturally, as is poffible for them; and they cannot do fo, if they do not, in fome manner, excite them in themfelves, and if their fouls do not take all the changes which we fee in their faces. Thofe then who reprezent a paffion, muft be, in fome meafure touched with it whilst they reprezent it; and it is not to be imagined, that they can prefently efface from their minds that impreffion, which they have voluntarily excited in it, and that it does not leave a great difpofition to that fame paffion which they have been fo willingly fenfible of. Thus, plays are, even in their nature, a fchool and an exercife of vice, fince it is an art in which one muft neceffarily excite in himfelf vicious paffions. And if we confider that the whole life of players is employed in this exercife, that they pafs it entirely, either in learning by

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themselves, or rehearsing among one another, or in representing to spectators, the image of some vice; and that they have scarce any thing in their minds but these follies; we shall easily see, that it is impossible to join this employment with the purity of our religion. And thus, it must be owned, it is a prophane employment, and unworthy of a christian; and that, by consequence, it is not allowable for others to contribute to maintain them in a profession contrary to christianity, tianity 31 or to authorize it by their preference.

—‘Those deceive themselves extremely, who think that plays make no ill impression on them, because they do not find them excite any formed evil desire.—There are many degrees before one comes to an entire corruption of mind, and it is always extremely hurtful to the soul, to destroy the ramparts which secured it from temptation.

‘One does not begin to fall when the fall becomes sensible; the fallings of the soul are slow, they have progressions and preparations; and it often happens, that we are overcome by temptations only by our having weakened ourselves in occasions, which seemed of no importance; it being certain, that he who despises little things, shall fall by little and little.’

—‘It must not be imagined that these wicked maxims, of which plays are full, are not hurtful, because people do not go there to form their sentiments, but to divert themselves; for they do not fail of making impressions, notwithstanding, without being perceived; and a gentleman will more sensibly resent an affront, and be the more easily transported to avenge it in the criminal manner which is common in France, when he has heard such sort of verses recited; the reason of which is, that our passions are excited by the objects, and the false opinions with which the mind is prepossessed. The opinion that the Chimera of honor is so great a good, that it must be preserved, even at the expense of life, is what produces the brutal rage of the gentlemen of France. If those who fight a duel were never spoke of but as fools and madmen, as indeed they are; if that phantom of honor, which is their idol, was never represented but as a chimera and a folly; if care was taken never to form any image of revenge, but as of a mean and cowardly action; the resentment which men feel upon an affront would be infinitely weaker; but that which exasperates and renders it the

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more lively, is the false impression, that there is cowardice in bearing an affront. Now, it cannot be denied, that plays, which are full of these evil maxims, do greatly contribute to fortify that impression, because the mind being by them transported, and entirely out of itself, instead of correcting those sentiments, abandons itself to them without resistance, and delights to feel the motions they inspire, which dispose it to produce the like upon occasion.'

—'Plays and romances not only indispense the foul for all acts of religion and piety; but they give it a disguise, in some measure, of all serious and ordinary actions. As nothing is represented in them but gallantries, or extraordinary adventure, and the discourses are far distant from such as are used in serious affairs, one infensibly takes from them a romantic disposition of mind; the head is filled with heroes and heroines, and women seeing the adorations which in them are given to their sex (of which they find the image and practice in companies of diversion, where young men talk to them what they have learned in romances, treating them as nymphs and goddesses) imprint that sort of life so much in their fancy, that the little affairs of their family and housewifery become insupportable to them; and when they return to their houses, with minds thus evaporated and filled with these follies, they find every thing there disagreeable, and especially their husbands, who, being taken up with their affairs, are not always in the humour of paying them those ridiculous complaisances which are given to women in plays, in romances, and in the romantic life.'

—'The need which men have of diversion, is not by far so great as is thought, and it consists more in imagination, or in custom, than in a real necessity. Those who are employed in bodily labour, have only need of a bare cessation from it. Those who are employed in affairs to it come to the mind, and but little laborious to the body, have need to recollect themselves from that disposition which those sort of employments naturally cause, and not to dissipate themselves yet more, by diversions which extremely engage the the mind. 'Tis a jest to fancy that one has need to pass three hours in filling the mind with follies at a play.

Those who find in themselves this need, ought to look on it, not as a natural weaknes, but as a vice of custome, which they must cure by serious employments.' 'If

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—'If the soul abandons itself to these false pleasures, it immediately loses the relief of spiritual ones, and finds nothing but disgust for the word of God. These are those four grapes, of which the prophet says, "They benumb, and fet on edge, the teeth of those who eat them."—Jer. xxx. 31.—That is to say, when one feeds himself with the vain pleasures of the world, the spiritual senses become stupified, and incapable of relieving, or understanding the things of God. Now, among the pleasures of the world which extinguish the love of the word of God, it may be said that plays and romances hold the first rank; because there is nothing more, opposite to truth, and that the Spirit of God, being a spirit of truth, can have no part with the vanities, of the world.'

—'There will be many persons ready to assert that they have never received any ill impressions from comedy; but I maintain either that they are very few in number, or that they are not sincere, or that they have not reflected enough on themselves to perceive it, or else, that the only reason why comedy has not corrupted their manners, is, because it found them already corrupted, and that had left it nothing to do in this matter.'

—'God does not impute to us the coldness which proceeds from the withdrawing of his light, or merely from the heaviness of this body; but, no doubt he imputes to us that, to which we have contributed, by our negligence, and our vain diversions. It is his will that we should esteem nothing so much as the gracious gifts, which he has made us of his love, and that we should be careful to preserve it by giving it nourishment. This command he has made to all Christians in the persons of the priests of the ancient law, whom he ordains always to maintain the fire on the altar, and to take care to put wood upon it, every day in the morning. This altar is the heart of man, and every christian is the one who ought to be careful to nourish the fire of charity on the altar of his heart, by putting wood every day up on it; that is to say, maintaining it by the meditation of divine things, and by exercises of

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piety. Now, if those who go to plays have yet any sense of piety, they cannot be disown that plays deaden, and entirely extinguish devotion; so that, they should not doubt, God judges them extremely guilty, for having made so little account of his love; that instead of nourishing and endeavouring to augment it, they have not feared to extinguish it by their vain diversions; and that he will impute to them as a great sin, the abatement or the loss of their love to him. For if a dissipation of the goods of the world, and of earthly riches, by luxury and gaming, is no little sin, what must be judged of a dissipation of the goods of grace, and of that precious treasure scripture the scripture speaks of, which we ought to purchase, by the loss of all the goods, and all the pleasures of this life?’

FROM CHIEF JUSTICE HALE.

BEWARE of too much recreation. Some bodily exercise is necessary, for sedentary men especially; but let it not be too frequent, nor too long. Gaming, taverns, and play, as they are pernicious, and corrupt youth, so, if they had no other fault, they are justly to be declined, in respect to their excessive expense of time, and habituating men to idleness and vain thoughts, and disturbing passions and symptoms, when they are past, as well as while they are used.

CLARKE, in his Essay on study, speaking of plays romances, says, ‘By what I have seen of them, I believe they are generally very indifferently and foolishly written, in a way proper to recommend vanity and wickedness, rather than discredit them; they have a strong tendency to corrupt and debauch the mind with silly, mischievous notions of love and honor, and other things relating to the conduct of life.’

ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON, mentioning plays, says, They are intolerable, and not fit to be permitted in a civilized vilized 35 much less a Christian nation: they do most notoriously minister to vice and infidelity; by their profaneness, they are apt to instil bad principles into the minds of men, and to lessen that awe and reverence which all men ought to have of

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God and religion; and by their lewdnefs, they teach vice, and are apt to infect the minds of men, and difpofe them to fewd and diffolute practices.’—AND

Again, ‘fome parents are fuch monfters, as not “to know how to give good things to their children; but instead of bread give them a ftone; inftead of fifh give them a ferpent; inftead of an egg give them a fcorpion,’ as our Saviour expreffes it.

‘Thefe are evil indeed, who train up their children for ruin and deftruction. ‘Who, inftead of teaching them the fear of the Lord,’ infufe into them the principles of Atheifm, irreligion, and profanenefs; inftead of teaching them to love and reverence religion, they teach them to hate and defpife it, and to make a mock of both fin and holinefs; inftead of training them up in the knowledge of the holy fcriptures, which are able to make men wife unto falvation, they allow them to profane that holy book, and to abufe the word of God, which they ought to tremble at, by turning it into jeft and raillery; inftead of teaching them to pray and blefs the name of God, they allow them to blafpheme that great and terrible name, and to profane it by their continual oaths and imprecations; and inftead of bringing them to God's church, they carry them to play-houfes, and places of debauchery, thofe fchools and nurseries of lewdnefs and vice.’

The following are taken from the Works of WILLIAM LAW .

‘CAN any one think that he has a true Chriftian fpirit, that his heart is changed as it ought to be, whilst he is diverting himfelf with the polifhed lewdnefs, profanenefs, and impure difcourfes of the ftage? Can he think that he is endeavouring to be holy, as Chrif is holy, to live by his wifdom, and be full of his fpirit, fo long as he allows himfelf in fuch entertainments? For there is nothing in the 36 the nature of chriftian holinefs, but what is contrary to the fpirit and temper of thefe diverfions.’

—‘You own that God has called you to great purity of converfation; that you are forbid all *foolifh difcourfe and filthy jeftings* , as exprefsly as you are forbid fwearing; and that you are told to *let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth* ; and yet you

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go to a house of corrupt communication: you hire persons to entertain you with ribaldry, profaneness, rant, and impurity of discourse, who are to present you with poisonous sentiments, and lewd imaginations, dressed up in elegant language, and to make wicked, vain, and impure discourse more lively and delightful, than you could possibly have it in any ill company. Is not this fining with a high hand, and grossly offending against the plainest doctrines of scripture?’

—‘As prejudices, the force of education, the authority of numbers, the way of the world, the example of great names, may make people believe, so the same causes may make people act, against all sense and reason, and be guilty of practices which are utterly inconsistent with the purity of their religion.’

—‘The pleasures and diversions of people are certain means for judging of the state of their minds; nothing can please or affect us, but what is according to our nature, and which finds something within us that is suitable to itself. Had we not inward dispositions of tenderness and compassion, we should not find ourselves softened with miserable objects. In like manner, was there not some inward contracted corruption that finds itself gratified, by the irregular passions that are there represented, we should find no more pleasure in the stage, than blind men find in pictures.—If impure speeches, if wanton amours, if wild passions, and immoral rant, can give us any delight, is it not past all doubt, that we have contracted something of all these disorders? *And that we nourish and strengthen them by those gratifications?*

—‘There is no doctrine of our blessed Saviour, that more concerns all Christians, or is more essential to their salvation, than this: “blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” ‘Now, take the stage in its best state, when some admire tragedy is upon it; are the extravagant passions of distracted lovers, the impure ravings of inflamed heroes, the joys and torments of love, and refined description of hills; are the indecent actions, the amours, transports, the wanton addresses of the actors, which makes so great a part of the most sober

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and modeft tragedies; are thefe things confiftent with this chriftian ductrine of purity of heart?’

—‘All people who enter into thefe houfes of entertainment, or contribute the finall eft mine towards them muft look on themfelves, as having been, fo far, friends to the moft powerful infruments of fenfuality, and to be guilty of contributing to an open and public exercife of fplendid impurity and protanenefs. When we encourage any good defign, either with our content, our money, or prefence, we are apt to take a great deal of merit to ourfelves; prefently conclude that we are partakers of all that is good and praifeworthy in it, of all the benefit that arifes from it, becaufe we are contributors towards it. A man does not think that he has no fhare in fome public charity becaufe he is but one in ten thoufand that contributes towards it (*or becaufe it would go forward without his contribution* ;) but if it be a religious charity, and attended with great and happy effects, his confcience tells him, that he is a fharer of all that great good to which he contributed. Now, let this reach us how we ought to judge of the guilt of encouraging any thing that is bad, either with our content, our money, or our preafence. We muft not confider how much our fingle part contributes towards it, how much lefs we contribute than feveral thoufands of other people, *nor that work would go for ward if he did not at all contribute to it* ; but we muft look at the whole thing in itfelf, and whatever there is of evil in it, or whatever evil arifes from it, we muft charge ourfelves with a fhare of the whole guilt of fo great an evil.’

—‘People of fafhion and quality have great advantage above the vulgar; their condition and education give them a livelinefs and brightnefs of parts, from whence; one might 38 might juftly expect a more exalted virtue. How comes it then, that we fee as ill morals, as little religious wifdom and as great diforders among them, as among the moft rude, uneducated part of the world? It is becaufe the *pointenefs of the relives, their courfe of diverfions and amufements; and their way of fpending their time* , as much extinguifh, the wifdom and light of religion, as the groffnefs and ignorance or the dulleft part of the world.—Any way of the line *that darkens our minds, that mifemploys our underftanding, that fills us with a trifling fpirit, that a forders our paffions, that feparates us from the Spirit*

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of God, is the same certain road to destruction, whether it arises from thipid feufuality, rude ignorance or polite pleasures. Had any one, therefore, the power of an Apottle, or the tongue of an angel, it would be well employed, in expofing, and difsmanding from thofe ways of life, which wealth, corruption, and politenefs, have brought among us. We indeed only call them diverfions, but they do the whole work of idolatry and infidelity, and fill people with fo much blindnefs and hardnefs of heart, that they neither live by wifdom, nor feel the want of in, but are content to play away their lives with fcarce any attention to the approaching fcenes of death, judgement, and eternity.'

It appear evident, to every sober and unprejudiced mind, that the sentiments of thefe virtuous and enlightened men, againft fuch dangerous ways of fpending our time, are, indeed, folid and awakening truths. Let us therefore, as rational beings, as chriftians, who are travelling towards a better country, and who are called fo renounce the vanities of this perifhing world, affert the dignity of our nature, and act conformably to the excellence of our deftination. A new fleeting years will bring us all to the verge of an awful fcene, where, the vain diverfions and paftimes of this, will appear in their true light, a moft lamentable abufe of that precious time and talent, with which we have been entrusted, for the great purpofe of working out our foul's falvation. At that folemn period, the great bufinefs of religion, a pious and virtuous life, dedicated to the love and fervice to God, will appear of ineftimable value, and the only thing worthy the purfuit of reaſonable beings. Happy therefore will it be for 39 for us, if we become wife in time, take up the crofs to all enfharing pleasures, for the few remaining days of our live, and headily perfevere, under the divine aid, in fulfill the various duties affigned us, and in making forttable returns to the Author of all good, for the unmerited beffings which he has acondantly poured forth upon us. In thefe exalted employments, we that experience the noblefs pleasure, and feel us want of empty and injurious entertainments, to occupy our minds, or fill up our time. We fhall abhor the pretence of acquiring moral and refined sentiments, from fuch polluted, and feel ourfelves deeply concerned to difcountenance, by our example and influence, thofe splendid engines of impiety and diffipation.

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FINIS.